

Forbestown wildfire safety project completed

By Ryan Olson , Chico Enterprise-Record

Chicoer.com

Forbestown >> Officials and residents are celebrating the completion of a wildfire safety project in Forbestown.

Under the project, crews cleared brush and overstocked trees on more than 240 acres around the foothill community east of Oroville, according to Calli-Jane DeAnda, executive director of the Butte County Fire Safe Council.

Up in Paradise, the Butte County sheriff's fire-safe work crew and Paradise public works will begin a fuel reduction project Monday.

Regarding the Forbestown project, DeAnda said it had been geared to clear and connect defensible spaces on a ridgetop, roads and forest lands.

"The important thing in these projects is that we're trying to give firefighters a place to fight the fire from the ground," she said.

The work on the ridge could help keep fires from crossing between Brownsville and the Feather River drainage.

Collaborative effort

DeAnda said several groups worked together on the project, including fire safe councils in Butte and Yuba counties and Forbestown. The U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Cal Fire and Butte County Public Works also participated.

Representatives from many of these groups were scheduled to review some of the cleared areas Friday morning.

The \$386,000 project was funded by the Forest Service and implemented by the Butte County Fire Safe Council.

Randy Gould, ranger for the Plumas National Forest's Feather River Ranger District, said the project and partnership will help Forest Service workers do their job better.

He said a lot of people live in the foothill communities and their safety is important.

"It's just really critical that we help to make sure that they are as safe from fire as possible," Gould said.

The brush can grow thick in the area and Gould said it is a constant battle to keep it clear.

Cleared areas can help keep fires from spreading to tree canopies, minimize tree damage and provide safer areas for firefighters to defend spaces.

He praised residents and the fire safe councils for their work, saying an active public bolsters fire protection around homes. For this project, the Forest Service didn't work on private lands.

The project's origins go back about 10 years, but DeAnda said plans picked up momentum after the 2008 wildfires. She said Forbestown-area residents rallied and formed their own fire safe council.

Advertisement

About five years ago, both the Forbestown and Yuba County fire safe groups approached the Butte County council to seek help developing the grant request, DeAnda said.

Work done in phases

Crews completed the work in three phases over two years. One phase was to clear along Forbestown Road to maintain it as an evacuation route.

DeAnda said county public works crews were able to clear the right-of-way along the road while other crews could clear up to 200 feet away from the roadway.

Another phase treated timberland along Lower Forbestown Road while the final phase tackled the ridge off of Black Bart Road.

Crews used different equipment including chippers, bulldozers and masticators. DeAnda said the mastication equipment was a larger type similar to that used by the timber industry. The gear can mow down brush and remove trees.

DeAnda said one of the goals was to keep the forest healthy. In this case, the biomass is returned to the soil while removed plants help free up light and water for other trees. She said the shade from the remaining trees will hopefully slow the return of brush.

Paradise project

On the Paradise ridge, crews will begin work Monday to maintain a clear and open fire break on Pearson Road between Pentz and Clark roads. It is a primary evacuation corridor, but it has become overgrown with trees, shrub and brush, according to a town press release.

Over the next two to three weeks, Butte County inmates and town crews will work in the town right-of-way to prune trees, remove overhanging limbs and remove other potential fire fuels.

There will be traffic controls during the work, including reducing access to a single lane with reversible traffic. Drivers can expect minor delays.

Reach reporter Ryan Olson at [facebook.com/NorCalJustice](https://www.facebook.com/NorCalJustice) and 896-7763.



Ryan Olson

Ryan Olson covers local court cases for the Enterprise-Record. In 1994, he and 300 members of his school marching band appeared in a Snapple ad directed by Spike Lee. Reach the author at rolson@chicoer.com or follow Ryan on Twitter: [@NorCalJustice](https://twitter.com/NorCalJustice).

- [Full bio and more articles by Ryan Olson](#)
- [Back to top](#)